

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BANGKO 21580 101327Z

43

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10 /066 W

----- 065479

O P 101238Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2677

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

CINCPAC HONOLULU

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL SONGKHLA

AMCONSUL UDORN

COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK

DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 21580

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, TH, LA

SUBJECT: THAI-LAO RIVERBOAT CLASH

REF: BANGKOK 21578 (DAO BKK IR 6 895 0478 75)(101149Z OCT 75)

SUMMARY: BANGKOK PRESS OCTOBER 10 REPORTS CLASH ON MEKONG RIVER OCTOBER 9 BETWEEN THAI RIVER PATROL BOAT AND ARMED LAO BOAT DESCRIBED IN SOME PRESS REPORTS AS BEING RUSSIAN-BUILT. DAO SOURCES AND CONSULATE UDORN REPORT PRESS ACCO U TS HIGHLY INFLATED. BOAT NOT REPEAT NOT RUSSIAN BUILT BUT LOCAL CRAFT. INCIDENT UNDERLINES POTENTIAL FOR BUT DOES NOT NECESSARILY FORBODE TROUBLE ALONG RIVER, PARTICULARLY AS THAILAND AND LAOS NOW ARE NOT ON PARTICULARLY FRIENDLY TERMS. END SUMMARY.

1. BANGKOK POST OCTOBER 10 CARRIES REPORT OF LAO GUNBOAT ALLEGEDLY SUNK IN BATTLE WITH THAI MEKONG RIVER

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGKO 21580 101327Z

PATROL BOAT IN CHIENGGAN DISTRICT OCTOBER WOM FIVE

LAO CREWMEN ABOARD LAOTIAN CRAFT REPORTED AS MISSING, BELIEVED DROWNED. BANGKOK AFTERNOON PRESS OCTOBER 10 REPORTS ALL POLICE AND DEFENSE FORCES IN LOEI PROVINCE HAD BEEN ORDERED ON FULL ALERT IN ANTICIPATION THAT PATHET LAO TROOPS MAY LAUNCH MORTAR ATTACK ON LOEI PROVINCE (NEAR SCENE OF CLASH ON MEKONG) IN REPRISAL.

2. DAO HAS OBTAINED DETAILS OF INCIDENT FROM THAI MILITARY SOURCES, AND IT IS CLEAR THAT PRESS ACCOUNTS HAVE BEEN GREATLY EXAGGERATED. DAO REPORT BEING SENT ALSO TO DEPT.

3. CONSULATE IN UDORN INFORMS EMBASSY THAT VICE GOVERNOR OF LOEI PROVINCE STATES LAO BOAT INVOLVED IN CLASH WAS A NATIVE QTE LONG TAIL END QTE TYPE (I.E., BRIGGS AND STRATTON TYPE ENGINE WITH LONG DRIVE SHAFT TO PROPELLOR OFTEN 10 FEET OR MORE IN LENGTH). LAO BOAT WAS REPORTEDLY ARMED, THOUGH DETAILS OF ARMAMENT NOT RPT NOT AVAILABLE. LAO BOAT WAS DEFINITELY NOT RPT NOT RUSSIAN RIVER CRAFT, AS SOME PRESS ACCOUNTS INDICATED.

4. THERE WAS ONE CLASH IN THE MORNING WHEN A THAI MEKONG RIVER OPERATIONS UNIT (MROU) PATROL BOAT RECEIVED FIRE FROM THE LAO BANK AND RETURNED IT BRIEFLY, AND AGAIN IN THE AFTERNOON WHEN THE LAO LONG TAILED BOAT VISITED THE THAI SHORE. THE LAO BOAT APPARENTLY CAPSIZED WHEN THOSE ON BOARD SCRAMBLED IN RESPONSE TO SMALL ARMS FIRE FROM THE THAI BANK. THE VICE GOVERNOR SAID THAT A MROU ELEMENT FIRED FROM JEEPS ON SHORE IN RESPONSE TO A CALL FOR HELP FROM THE VILLAGERS OF KHOK NGIEW, CHIANG KHAN DIST, LOEI.

5. ACCORDING TO CONSUL IN UDORN, STRINGER FOR BANGKOK NEWSPAPER REPORTS THAT SOURCES IN MROU WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR STORY THAT BOATS WERE RUSSIAN. STRINGER ALSO FEELS THAT INCIDENT RESULTED FROM BAD BLOOD BETWEEN THAI AND LAO NEAR VILLAGES OF KHOK NGIEW. ON OCTOBER 5 PATHET LAO TROOPS REPORTEDLY ENTERED THAI HEALTH CENTER IN PAK CHONG DISTRICT, ADJOINING CHIANG KHAN, AND DEMANDED DRUGS AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES. THERE HAS ALSO REPORTEDLY BEEN AN EXCHANGE OF INSULTS BETWEEN THAI AND LAO RIVER PATROL UNITS.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BANGKO 21580 101327Z

6. SINCE INITIAL BRUSH OCTOBER 9, NO REPEAT NO FURTHER INCIDENT REPORTED.

7. COMMENT: AT THIS POINT INCIDENT DOES NOT REPEAT NOT APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN SERIOUS. HOWEVER, AS A LAO BOAT HAS BEEN SUNK, IT SEEMS POSSIBLE THAT LAO WILL BIDE THEIR TIME TILL THEY CAN EVEN SCORE. INCIDENT UNDERLINES SCOPE FOR INCIDENTS BETWEEN

TWO COUNTRIES WHOSE POPULATIONS ARE USED TO MIXING CLOSELY BUT
WHOSE GOVERNMENTS ARE CURRENTLY ON ANYTHING BUT CLOSE
AND FRIENDLY TERMS. RTG OFFICIALS IN LOEI CHARACTERIZE INCIDENT
AS ANOTHER IRRITANT IN A SERIES, BUT NOT SOMETHING THAT WILL
GROW BIGGER.
WHITEHOUSE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, COMBAT OPERATIONS, NAVAL SHIPS, CASUALTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: RowellE0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BANGKO21580
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750353-0042
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751063/aaaacdxw.tel
Line Count: 121
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BANGKOK 21578
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 JUL 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <18 NOV 2003 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THAI-LAO RIVERBOAT CLASH
TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, TH, LA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006